

CLEARFIELD

Guard audit under way

Two months ago, the Pennsylvania National Guard dropped plans to build a tank training center in sparsely populated northeast Clearfield County. Now, the state auditor general will examine whether money was misspent in the abandoned effort.

The state Department of Military Affairs, which oversees the Guard, said in November that it was killing plans to spend \$4.35 million on a 4,700-acre training ground, blaming "persistent and vocal opposition."

But under the sales option agreements the state forged, land owners still got to keep 10 percent of the proposed sales prices, or \$435,857.

The Guard defended its conduct as proper. But state Rep. Camille George, D-Clearfield, repeatedly noted that the major would-be landholder involved was local resident C. Alan Walker, a major contributor to Gov. Tom Ridge's campaigns, and yesterday called the money "squandered."

The auditor general is supposed to examine whether the state studied the situation well enough before committing money and whether the land acquisition deals were legal.